

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are currently pending in the application.

The claimed invention involves a system and process for managing business, technical and operational data using a single interface in a shared space environment over the Internet. A supplier portal creates a central repository for registration process, information, company information, and user information, making this information available to all applications that open into the supplier portal. A userid/password 102 is obtained from a supplier (guest) coordinator 101 and supplied to a business representative 103. An application coordinator provides information to a portal administrator at 104. This information includes the company name, application, and supplier coordinator name, userid, e-mail, etc. A determination is made in decision block 105 as to whether the supplier is registered. If the supplier is not registered, then a company profile is created in function block 106. If the supplier is registered, then a further determination is made in decision block 107 as to whether the application is registered. If the application is not registered, then a company and its mapping is created in function block 108 and, in function block 109, the supplier coordinator is registered and authorized to use the application. If the application is registered as determined in decision block 107, then a further determination is made in decision block 110 as to whether the application is mapped to the supplier and supplier coordinator. If the application is not mapped to the supplier and supplier coordinator, the supplier coordinator mapping to the application is created in function block 111. Finally, an e-mail note is sent to the supplier coordinator application administrator in function block 112.

Rejection of Claims 1-7

Claims 1-7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,606,606 to Starr in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,611,275 to Zey et al. This rejection essentially repeats the previous rejection of Claims 1-7 as anticipated by Starr alone, except that the Examiner now combines Starr with in Zey et al. out of

recognition that Starr does not teach the sending of an approval request by email. (Ofice Action at 4)

Applicants traverse as discussed below.

Claims 1 and 7

Independent Claims 1 and 7, which have been rejected as obvious in view of Starr and Zey et al., claim a supplier portal which is patentably distinct from what is taught by Starr and/or Zey et al. Except for this discussion of Zey et al., and the citation of 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) instead of § 102(e), the rejection of Claims 1 and 7 repeats verbatim the language of previous rejection of Claims 1 and 7 under Starr in the previous office action. That rejection is discussed at length in Applicants' response to the previous office action, which Applicants hereby incorporate by reference as if fully restated herein.

Claims 1 and 7 enable the management of business, technical and operational data using a single interface in a shared space environment over the Internet by: (a) providing a supplier portal as described in Claim 1, lines 4-6, and Claim 7, lines 4-5; (b) determining whether a guest is a registered user as described in Claim 1, lines 7-10, and Claim 7, lines 6-10; (c) storing guest information as described in Claim 1, lines 11-12, and Claim 7, lines 11-14; (d) determining whether applications have been authorized for a registered guest as described in Claim 1, lines 13-16, and Claim 7, lines 15-17; (e) accessing information to build a customized home page for the guest as described in Claim 1, lines 17-19, and Claim 7, lines 18-20; (f) determining whether approval is needed for a requested application and, if so, sending by email a request for approval to the application administrator and receiving a response from the application administrator as described in Claim 1, lines 20-22, and Claim 7, lines 21-23; and (g) storing links to all applications for which the guest is approved as described in Claim 1, lines 23-25, and Claim 7, lines 24-26.

In response to the previous office action, Applicants added the requirement to use email to request approval to use a requested application, where the use of email had not previously been specified in Claims 1 and 7. In the current office action, the Examiner

relies on three paragraphs from the specification of Zey et al. to provide this feature. (Zey et al., column 8, lines 23-37, cited in the Office Action at 4) However, Zey et al. do not teach the requested feature, and a combination of Zey et al. with Starr would not be obvious.

Zey et al. do not teach “sending by email a request for approval.” (Claim 1, line 21; and Claim 7, line 22) Instead, Zey et al. teach generating an email, not for the purpose of forwarding a request for approval to an approver, as in Claims 1 and 7, but instead for the purpose of providing a requester with notice as to whether approval has been denied or granted. (Zey et al., column 8, lines 23-37, cited in the Office Action at 4) Furthermore, Zey et al. do not teach use of an email feature in connection requesting, granting, or denying approval to use “a requested application” (Claim 1, line 20; and Claim 7, line 21) but instead teach the use of email in connection with communicating or scheduling maintenance requests. Thus, a combination with Zey et al. would not provide the feature of using email to request approval to use a requested application to a reference lacking that feature. As a result, a combination of Zey et al. with Starr would not result in Claims 1 and 7.

Finally, there is no apparent reason why an invention to provide small business owners with centralized control over transactions and accounts, such as Starr, would be combined with an invention for communicating and scheduling maintenance requests, such as Zey et al. For that reason, Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner is in error to find a combination of Starr and Zey et al. to be obvious.

Claims 2-6

The rejection of Claims 2-6 is traversed on the basis that Claims 2-6 should be allowed as dependent from allowable Claim 1. In addition, the Examiner’s discussion of the erroneous rejection of Claims 2-6 repeats verbatim the rejection of Claims 2-6 in the office action mailed December 28, 2004, which in turn repeats verbatim the rejection of Claims 2-6 in the office action mailed August 18, 2004. Accordingly, Applicants’

discussion of Claims 2-6 in the office action mailed August 18, 2004, is hereby incorporated by reference as if fully restated herein.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that Claims 1-7 be allowed and that the application be passed to issue. In the alternative, it is requested that this amendment be entered for purpose of appeal.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

A provisional petition is hereby made for any extension of time necessary for the continued pendency during the life of this application. Please charge any fees for such provisional petition and any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Deposit Account No. 09-0458 (IBM-Fishkill).

Respectfully submitted,



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